

WRITING MOTIVATION

If you've ever had trouble starting an essay or staying focused, you are not alone! Getting started and staying motivated can be the most challenging parts of writing an essay. The Student Success Centre's Writing & Study Skills Coaches are excited to share their tips and personal strategies for putting pen to paper and getting it done.

1. Create a good workspace! Find one place where you're productive and do all your work there. It could be your bedroom, a study space on campus, or the Hamilton Public Library.
2. Don't wear sweatpants! If you find yourself getting snuggly and falling asleep while you work on essays, try to stay alert by keeping yourself a little less comfortable.
3. On the other hand, if being comfortable keeps you focused, keep those motivational yoga pants on!
4. Use work as a way to relax. If the task of a big essay makes you feel anxious, try breaking into small pieces and working on just one part. Doing that could make a huge difference in your stress level, and you could also build momentum!
5. Set boundaries of space and time. Set a timer for a short amount of time (for example, 10 or 15 minutes) and work until the time stops.
6. Be ready to fail at productivity. You won't always be completely productive, and that's okay! Come back to it later with fresh eyes and renewed energy.
7. Let yourself daydream. Set aside some time to dream so it doesn't get in the way when you're trying to work.
8. Not interested in the topic or in what you're writing? Find some part of it that is interesting, and focus on that part.
9. Watch YouTube videos, like TED Talks or short documentaries, on your topic. Listening to a passionate speaker or learning about something in a new way can make you more interested too!
10. If your lack of progress is getting you down, think about a time you were productive. You did it then; you can do it now!
11. Use tools or strategies to get stuff done. Setting deadlines or reminders in Google calendars might wake you up, or you could set small goals for each day.
12. Distracted online? Turn off Wi-Fi, ask a friend to change your password, or use a website blocker like StayFocused or SelfControl to stop you from visiting those pesky sites.
13. If you forget about your work or put it off until the last minute, have regular reminders staring you in the face. A big wall calendar, post-it notes, daily phone alerts, or notes on your computer desktop might be all you need!
14. Crossing things off a to-do list can feel fantastic.
15. Find a motivated friend who will keep you accountable.
16. Drinking water can help you stay focused and alert!

ACADEMIC

17. If you're having trouble concentrating or staying awake, go to the gym or take a walk. You'll come back with more energy and a better attitude.
18. Self-bribery can be fun and motivating. "Once I finish this paragraph, I'll eat a packet of gummy bears!" "When I'm finished writing this chapter, I'll watch ONE episode of Doctor Who!"
19. Plan your week! Every Sunday, look at the week ahead and decide when you'll work and when you won't. Try to stick to that schedule.
20. Set deadlines with other people and stick to those deadlines! If you and a friend both promise to finish your outlines or first drafts by a certain time, you're accountable to each other. You can also try setting deadlines with your TA.
21. Find out when you work best (night? Morning?) and work then. Stick to that rhythm!
22. Try listening to one song on repeat so you don't procrastinate by choosing music. It might even put you in a productive trance!
23. If you're not sure where to start, write down everything you need to do in order to finish your essay. Break the big things down into smaller pieces. Then start with something small!
24. See a Writing & Study Skills Coach! We can help you brainstorm, fine-tune your ideas, and finish your final draft. Make an appointment in [OSCARplus!](#)